

REP. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY 2018 FARM BILL PRIORITIES

Developed in collaboration with the
NY-18 Agriculture Advisory Board





OFFICE OF REP. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY
FARM Bill Priorities

Agriculture is a powerful driver of the Hudson Valley local economy. Over 1,500 farms in Dutchess, Orange, Putnam and Westchester counties employ thousands of folks in the Hudson Valley.

The NY-18 Agriculture Advisory Board is made up of dozens of farmers and producers from across all four counties in the 18th Congressional District. Although board members are from many different sectors, the advisory board has focused on ways to improve opportunities for the Hudson Valley as Congress considers the next Farm Bill including:

CROP INSURANCE

New York's farmers need an insurance plans that work for the diverse, small, family owned farms of the Hudson Valley. In the 2014 Farm Bill, I was able to include the *Creating Reliability for Our Producers (CROP) Act* to help encourage the development of better insurance plans for our producers. Now, farmers can access Whole Farm Revenue Protection that recognizes the value of a diversified farm. But we need to address barriers that exist for beginning farmers to access crop insurance by creating an on-ramp for the many beginning farmers who lack production or revenue history as well as incentivize approved insurance providers to sell Whole Farm Revenue Protection. As we look to the next Farm Bill, I am committed to improving all risk management products for the many highly diversified farms in the Hudson Valley.

SUPPORTING SPECIALTY CROPS

Specialty crops generate nearly \$1.4 billion for New York's economy each year, making up one-third of New York's agriculture industry. In the Hudson Valley, diversification of crops is at an all-time high. In this Farm Bill, I will continue to fight for specialty crop research, product quality enhancement, and food safety with programs like the Specialty Crop Research Initiative and Specialty Crop Block Grants, which strengthen all aspects of Hudson Valley agriculture and help to ensure long-term viability of specialty crops.

INCREASING ACCESS TO CREDIT

Family farms are small businesses and many are looking to increase access to credit in order to survive in the wake of disaster or expand their business. Both the Farm Services Agency (FSA) loan program and USDA Business and Industry Guaranteed Loan Program should be modernized and streamlined to ensure lending is flexible.

Beginning farmers often lack the capital, land, training opportunities and the scale of operation required to make profits. I introduced the *Young and Beginning Farmers Act* to reduce barriers for beginning farmers such as access to credit, land access issues and to create opportunities for training, mentorship and business development.

AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH

In an effort to remain globally competitive in agricultural production, we must redouble our efforts in agricultural research and development funding. In recent years, countries like China, India and Brazil have invested heavily in agricultural research and are already reaping the rewards. For every public dollar invested in agricultural research in the United States, we see \$20 in economic returns and yet our investment in agricultural research has remained largely flat. Created in the 2014 Farm Bill, the Foundation for Food and Agriculture Research has provided quick, localized research responses right here in the Hudson Valley for pests like the Allium Leafminer. Additionally, the Hudson Valley benefits from the research of Cornell University as well as the Cooperative Extension programs providing resources and education throughout the region. The next Farm Bill must prioritize the reauthorization and the strengthening of the USDA's National Institute of Food & Agriculture and Agricultural Research Service.



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PROTECTING THE SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (SNAP)

SNAP provides nutrition assistance for millions of children, seniors and other vulnerable individuals every year. It is our country's most important and efficient tool in the fight against hunger. With 42 million Americans struggling with hunger and food insecurity, we must renew our commitment to SNAP. And we need to bring SNAP into the 21st century with innovative ideas like expanding the pilot program I helped bring to New York allowing participants to purchase their groceries online.

EXPANDING DISTRIBUTION OF LOCALLY-GROWN FOOD

Many farmers are looking at expanding to new markets at local grocery stores or farmers markets in order to distribute fresh goods, from fruits and vegetables to dairy and meat products, to nearby families and local communities. That is why I introduced the *Local Food And Regional Market Supply (FARMS) Act* to build on the success of local and regional food economies by helping farmers tap into growing markets and helping consumers access healthy food. The next Farm Bill should look at strengthening programs that address production, aggregation, marketing and distribution needs while helping communities' access and afford fresh, nutritious food.

REDUCING REGULATORY BURDENS FOR FARMERS

Many of the farms across the district face too many burdensome government regulations. As Congress considers the Farm Bill, Congress should look at reducing extensive; often times duplicative paperwork that delays progress across farms.

PROTECTING CONSERVATION PROGRAMS

Historically, New York loses 10 times more farmland to development than it protects each year yet research shows how investments in land conservation and open space boost property values, support local businesses, help agriculture, save taxpayer dollars, and protect public health. By supporting investments in the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP), we can conserve vital Hudson Valley agricultural lands and ensure long term sustainability of local food sources, environmental quality and support the agricultural economy. Many of the public-private partnerships protect the rich agricultural history of the Hudson Valley, and it's important that a Farm Bill invests in these programs.

FIGHTING THE OPIOID EPIDEMIC IN RURAL COMMUNITIES

The opioid epidemic has affected individuals, families and communities throughout the country, knowing no boundaries. We need to use every tool in our toolkit, and that includes prioritizing USDA Rural Development programs that can be used to combat the opioid epidemic.